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Identical letters dated 28 January 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a communiqué of the Government of the Republic of Mali dated 27 January 2015 concerning a protest march held by the people of Gao against the decision to sign an accord between the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and certain armed groups with a view to establishing a temporary security zone in the area of Tabankort (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sékou **Kassé**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 28 January 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Communiqué

Today, on Tuesday, 27 January 2015, the people of Gao held a protest march against the decision to sign an agreement between the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and certain armed groups with a view to establishing a temporary security zone in the area of Tabankort.

This decision, taken on a non-inclusive basis, was seen as unfavourable to the ongoing peace and reconciliation process.

The protest march became violent, causing deaths and injuries.

The Government, which deplores this situation, extends its deepest condolences to the families of the victims and wishes the injured a speedy recovery.

It immediately sent a delegation to Gao to express its solidarity and its sympathy to the victims' families.

It reaffirms its commitment to social peace and public tranquillity, and appeals for calm and restraint.

The Government recalls that the protection of civilians is one of the core mandates of MINUSMA. It calls on MINUSMA to strengthen its capacity specifically for that purpose, namely, to ensure the protection of all civilian populations and the free movement of persons and goods.

The Government once again rejects all forms of violence and expresses its strong commitment to social peace. It recalls that civilians are bearing the brunt of the ongoing conflict and will continue to do so.

The Government calls upon MINUSMA to exercise impartiality in handling the freeze of positions and urges the Mission to join it in undertaking appropriate initiatives to address the resulting situation.

Having met with the MINUSMA leadership, the Government welcomes their decision to withdraw the document and their commitment to pursue an inclusive process for the consolidation of the ceasefire and the strengthening of security.

Bamako, 27 January 2015

(*Signed*) Tiéman Hubert **Coulibaly**
Chevalier de l'Ordre National
Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs,
African Integration and International Cooperation